

Prolix, the Ersatz Jedi

by Sanchez Joe

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My simple robes swirled about me as I slowly paced the gleaming floor. The triangular tiles spread across the large room, ending thrice at richly tapestried walls. My eyes scanned the washes of fine needlework and color salubriously, and they filled my senses again with appreciation.

The fourth wall was a thickly glassed window, through which crepuscular tendrils of shadow crept. I strode to the oriel and my attentions rested upon my reflection. My priapic and spurious face stared back at me and smiled broadly. I caressed my beard and ran my fingers through my long hair with haptic pleasure. I was wracked with satisfaction at my choice. I was a Jedi Knight.

I gazed past my mirrored image at the darkening city of Nharwan. The amaranthine towers seemed placed by the hand of a golden deity proud of its fulgurant creations, a small shining masterpiece skewered into the vast grasslands to remind it where it had been. The city was alone in the fields, a sparkle on the horizon.

A glimmering sliver fell from the sky, a ship descending into the quiet city. A tenebrous recognition brushed my consciousness. Did I know that ship?

I turned away from the window, noticing for the first time that I was not alone in the chambers. Chambers? Yes, not alone in the royal chambers. The King lay dead on the polished tiles. His mucilaginous blood pooled around him and for some reason I uttered riotous cachinnations. I finally quelled my outburst and waited.

Someone was coming.

You know, I receive nothing but gushing approbations from my fellows when I partake. My consanguineous contemporaries applaud me wildly whenever I return from a glowing success. This time would be no different. Though I sensed great power emanating from the approachers, I was recalcitrant in my devotion to see this sampling ended well. They would not stop me.

Obi-Wan and Yoda entered the royal chambers. I recognized them.

"Qui-Gon?" Yoda asked me, looking for some remnant.

"Not anymore." I answered, smiling. "The Midi-Clorian concatenation is nearly complete. You are too late." I smiled.

"Master Yoda," my Padawan said ingenuously, "what's wrong with him?"

"Correct you were, sending for me." Yoda said, "Infected with a Chthonic Parasite, your master is."

I realized then that I was in peril. Memories came that revealed Yoda's strength in the Force. As he closed his eyes, concentrating on my removal, I produced my lightsaber. I activated my weapon and advanced. Yoda's death was a necessity at that point. I raised my lightsaber to strike. My Padawan kicked me in the chest, knocking me off my feet. He stood between Yoda and myself.

"I'm sorry Master," Obi-Wan said, looking pained, "but I can't let you hurt Master Yoda."

Anger swelled in my breast. I could feel the diminutive master pulling at me, ripping me from my new vessel. I had to dispatch Obi-Wan quickly.

"Master Qui-Gon," the boy said, "you must fight this creature! Give us a chance to save you!"

An incredible feeling, to move at superhuman speeds. Everything slows to a crawl and it's just you and your frozen prey. I blurred forward, catching Obi-Wan by surprise. He barely blocked my green arc, keeping his head attached for a few seconds more. He came at me with a barrage, forcing me back a few steps. I kicked him in his pudenda hard, staggering him. I punched his wrist, sending his weapon clattering across the tiles. I raised my lightsaber for the kill.

I deactivated it and dropped it on the floor. Something tugged at my actions, something other than Yoda. My host. I couldn't move. My Midi-Clorians began to cleanse themselves of me.

Obi-Wan hurled himself at me, knocking me on my back. I saw his fist speeding at my face twice, then darkness.

I returned then to my realm of swirling smoke and darkness. My brothers laughed at me. Such a short and uneventful trip, I guess I would have done the same. No matter, I'll show them someday.

"Yourself again, Master Qui-Gon?" Yoda asked as I struggled to my feet. Obi-Wan stood ready if I wasn't. I was proud of him again.

"I think you've broken my nose Obi-Wan." I said, as I fingered cracked cartilage.

"I'm sorry master," he said, "but I was more concerned with the state of your soul at the time."

I looked at the dead king. "I did that?" I asked.

"No master," Obi-Wan answered, "I did. You don't remember?"

He walked over to me and removed something that was stuck to my back. It was a strip of parchment with complicated figures and writing on it. Obi-Wan dropped it on the floor and it burst into flame.

"The King lured us to Nharwan and slapped that paper on your back." Obi-Wan explained, "He was some kind of lunatic sorcerer. He wanted to take control of a Master Jedi to increase his power. After that, you were incoherent and violent. He tried the same thing with me and I had to kill him. I felt such a darkness coming from you, I wasn't sure what to do. You were chanting in some strange language and you were falling in and out of consciousness. You kept repeating the word 'Prolix'."

"Two hours away, Coruscant is," Yoda said, "so your Padawan asked for my assistance. A long time since I've dealt with a Chthonic Parasite. Hundred years ago it was."

"What was it?" I asked.

"No one really knows what they are." Yoda said, "But once identified, relatively easy to expunge, they are. Especially when caught in time."

"Thank you Master Yoda." I said, "And thank you Obi-Wan," I said, as I clasped my hands on his shoulders, "for your quick thinking."

"You're welcome Master," he said with a smile, "I'm just glad you're all right."

"Well, except for the nose," I laughed, and we three Jedi left the royal chambers to relate the story to the people of Nharwan.

The Force among it all swelled and surged while the Chthonic Parasites prodded and tested reality, waiting to be called into existence by evil-minded men.

End
file.